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The Global Islamic Conference: Counter Terrorism



**Best successor to
a great predecessor**



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A three-day conclave of Arab media persons was held in Kuwait under the auspices of the Arab Media Forum to discuss issues that are relevant to modern media in the Arab world. Saudi Arabia was the Guest of Honor in the 8th Forum that among others drew Saudi Information Minister Abdulaziz Khoja, Prince Waleed Bin Talal and MWL Director General for Media and Culture, Dr. Hassan Al-Ahdal. *An MWL Journal Report.*

Globalization and the future of Islamic civilization **14**



Civilization is not what Bertrand Russel says the 'pursuit of luxury'; nor is it the 'pursuit of profit' as was propounded by Adam Smith. It is also not the 'pursuit of surplus', which was the catchphrase of the Communist ideology. *Prof. Ali Mazrui* in this highly scholarly work defines civilization as something borne out of the pursuit of cultural synthesis. And he has his own powerful argument to buttress the point.

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Abdul Baseer while reviewing the book, *Culture Locking & Culture Carrying: The Secrets Revealed* by Peter W Ball, finds that the author when penning down this 'research-cum-Islamophobia' work is victim of the same media propaganda to demean Islam.

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Islamization of Sports: An assessment II

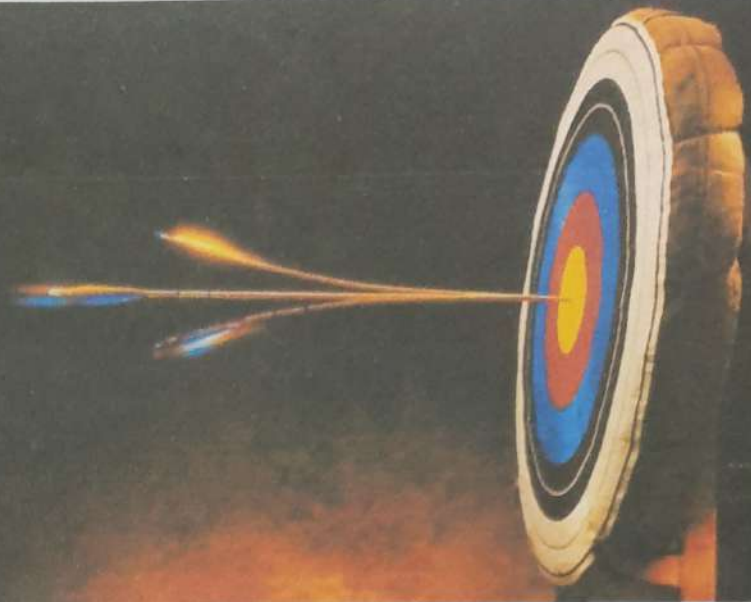


Dr. Zubair Zafar Khan

Islamic reforms and guidelines to sports and recreation

Islam not only permits but encourages recreation and sports with certain laws and morals. It is a famous saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that, 'a strong momin is better than a weak one'. (Muslim)¹ Scholars interpret the word 'strong' as healthy. However, he reformed the unlawful sports and recreations of pre-Islamic Arabia.

1. He prohibited sports in which any living being was harmed.
2. In pre-Islamic Arabia there was a game in which many camels collectively ran long distances until the last one survived. Muhammad (peace be upon him) discouraged this game.
3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited from playing games in which archers targeted a living creature for training archery. Ibn 'Umar happened to pass by a group of men who had tied a hen and were shooting arrows at it. When they saw Ibn 'Umar coming, they scampered off. Ibn 'Umar angrily remarked: 'Who has done this? Verily! Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) has invoked a curse upon those who do this kind of things. (Bukhari)² In another Hadith, Allah's Messenger forbade eating a *mujaththema*.³
4. In addition, he prohibited the organisation of unnecessary fights between animals. Like, cock fighting, lamb fighting etc. in which animals were harmed severely.
5. He also prohibited betting in sports and declared betting a punishable sin.
6. It is also not permitted for both men and women to devote too much time in watching sports which hinders other necessary jobs.
7. He allowed wrestling only when one floors his opponent without harming his body.
8. Islam prohibits sports of women in public.
9. It also prohibits mixed gender sports.
10. Islam prohibits consumption of alcohol for recreation purposes.
11. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) allowed music and singing but only in case when singer girls are of below adult age or the singer will be a mehram.
12. Also, the content of the poetry must not be romantic, or teasing to anyone.
13. It is also disliked in Islam to consume too much time in recreation and sports because these things are only for refreshment and health and not the aim of life. A momin should mostly devote his time in constructive works and to worship his lord.
14. In supporting a team, hooliganism should be avoided. Also, there is no place for gloating. Having an upper hand in games does not want jeering at a defeated opponent. Islam views sports as a means of enhancing mutual love and cooperation among people, not a means of hurting feelings. That's why the winning party should never be carried away with joy to the extent of insulting the opponents, nor must the defeated party be eaten up with envy at his counterpart's advantage. He must keep in mind that his today's loss will pave way for his tomorrow



success, if he keeps patience and tries to improve himself. This reminds us of the occasion when a nomad's camel outpaced the Prophet's she-camel which was known to be ever-first in racing, Muslims felt sad. Commenting on the issue, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Almighty Allah has decreed that nothing shall have a permanent glory (meaning that every situation has its ups and downs and no condition is permanent)." The Prophet (peace be upon him), made this statement to cool down the feelings of Muslims.

15. A Muslim is not permitted to give himself loose rein in practicing sports in a way that involves inflicting harm on others. Practicing sports in crowded streets, causing traffic jams is not an Islamic way for example.
16. While practicing sports there should be no room for foul words, bad behaviour and slandering.

Challenges to a Muslim sportsman

From the above discussion it is cleared that, Islam has given due importance to sports and entertainment. Islam is a natural religion and therefore it does not ignore any natural human requirement. There is no harm if a person entertains himself to relax his mind or refresh himself with some permissible sports. Many new sports and games have been introduced in the modern age. However there are some challenges before a Muslim sportsman to participate in. We are highlighting some of them in brief.

* The greatest challenge for a Muslim sportsman to participate in modern day sports is to main-

tain Satr norms of Islam. Satr or Awrah, are terms used, which denotes the intimate parts of the body, for both men and women, which must be covered with clothing. Exposing the awrah is unlawful in Islam and is regarded as sin. It is mandatory to cover from the bellybutton to just below the knees for men in any situation. For women, from the navel to just below the knees while in the presence of the same sex.⁴ While in the presence of the opposite sex other than her marital spouse, woman should cover her whole body excluding face, hands to wrist and legs to ankles. Maintaining Satr norms is the greatest challenge for Muslims especially for women while participating in sports, because most of the modern-day sports costumes do not meet the satr criteria.

* Another great challenge faced by Muslim sportsman is time consumption. Islam discourages too much time consumption in sports and recreation, because at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) sports were not introduced as profession. Now the purpose of sports increased to a great extent. These days' sports have become an industry and participating in sports is a glamorous profession and earns a lot. Therefore, it could be permissible to devote more time in sports if a man chooses it as a profession.

* The third issue is taking reward for games. As discussed above sports are a good means of earning. So if a man takes reward whether in terms of wages or prizes it is halal if he participates faithfully in permissible sports under Islamic norms. However, it is severely prohibited to involve in any unlawful activity like betting or match fixing. Rewards earned by these unlawful means, will be Haram.

*Watching sports. Islam permits watching sports. However, watching sports in stadiums are not advisable places for Muslims in general, because of the language, drinking and scenery. Allah has commanded the Muslims to lower their gaze, and sports come as no exception, especially with guys and girls in shorts. However if these conditions do not prevail they can watch sports.

* Another great issue for Muslim women participating is sports, that none of the sports is permissible if non-mehram or strange males are watching them. According to Islam chastity and modesty is the greatest virtue of a woman. Islam discourages all activities which harm the modesty of a woman and cause distrust in marital relationship.

Therefore, in every sports whether indoor or outdoor, Muslim woman must play where only women or her mehran (her household males) can watch her. Because by watching a playing women cause attraction to opposite sex, which could be resulted to bad consequences. Likewise, in gyms. Many women-only gyms have become popular these days.

Islamic Solidarity Games

Sports have become an industry. Millions of dollars are being spent on it and many rich countries organize national and international tournaments of various sports. The Olympic Games are the biggest one. There are great challenges for the Muslim countries and their sportsmen to follow the modern standards. Some of these challenges have been discussed above. Recently some efforts have been made for the Islamization of sports. Islamic Solidarity Games established by the Organization of the Islamic Conference are an effort in this regard to introducing Islamic sports with modern standards. Its first games were held in 1980 in Izmir Turkey⁵ and included both men's and women's track-and-field events with participation from nine countries and one unofficial country (Algeria, Bahrain, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus). The next Games were held in Saudi Arabia in 1983.

The Islamic Solidarity Games were last held in 2005 in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

Islamization of women sports

Islamic women sports appear to be a contradic-

tion in terms at least what many people in the West believe. The conviction that women in Islamic countries either cannot, will not, or may not take part in sports (or at least in competitive sports) is partly borne out of the fact that Muslim immigrants, especially women, scarcely take any active part in sports.

In the Olympic Games, for example, where nearly half of the participants are female, women from Islamic countries are a small, nearly invisible. But there are exceptions. There is Nawal El Moutawakel, a Moroccan hurdler who won the women's 400-meter event at the 1984 Summer Olympics, or Hassiba Boulmerka who won an Olympic gold medal in the 1500-meter run in 1992. When she later returned to Algeria, she was hailed as a national heroine. Besides, some institutions started organizing women Islamic sports. We can call it as Islamization of women sports.

The 'Women's Islamic Games' were foremost among the efforts of Islamization of women sports. The Women's Islamic Games is an international multi-sport event started in 1993. The event is organized by the Islamic Federation of Women's Sport (IFWS).⁶ The event has been held in 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005 in Iran and will be held in 2010 in what will be the newly built Azadiye Stadium. Muslim women of all nationalities are allowed to take part in the games. Muslim women athletes faced difficulties as a result of the conflict between their desire to compete and their religious beliefs. The Women Sports Solidarity Council (Federation of Islamic women's sports) was formed, following an agreement between Faezah Hashemi, International Olympic Committee President (IOC), Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah AlFahd, and Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani. The Federation of Islamic women's sports works within the framework of the Olympic Charter, with the aim of holding Olympic sports events while preserving Islamic principles and standards. It aims to strengthen solidarity among Muslim women and the Islamic identity, promote excellence in women's sports, reject racial and class discrimination in accordance with Islam, promote sporting culture, and form educational courses in various disciplines working in the program.

Islamization of sports costumes

Today mostly the modern sports costumes do not

fulfil the criterion of *satr*. That is why, for Muslim women, going to the pool or beach is difficult because of Islamic *satr* norms.

However recently some brands introduced sports costumes in some sports which fulfill the *satr* criterion. For instance, an Indonesian Muslim apparel brand; 'Zehba Fashion Wears', developed new full-body swimsuits for women. The brand provides a variety of full-body swimwear. These swim wears developed for Muslim women who want to enjoy swimming with fulfilling the *awrah* norms and do not want to expose *satr* during swimming. These suits made up of polyester; nylon and Lycra material allows for flexible movement in the water and does not stick to the woman's body when she exits the ocean or pool.

Most Muslim women purchase three-piece suits, according to Zehba workers. The suits now being made are increasingly fashionable. In Muslim countries like Indonesia and Malaysia their demand increasing rapidly. For Muslim women, these suits offer the only alternative to wearing regular clothes when swimming. Today, about a dozen stores, based in the United States and abroad, sell these swim wears to Muslim-American women, mostly through online catalogs. In the past, religious women in Turkey either did not go to the beach or wore regular clothing into the water. In Egypt swim suits for Muslim women is better known as 'Shariah swimsuit'. It is a part of growing industry catering for religiously-observant women. It is no longer confined to westernized elite that can afford such leisure activities as swimming.

Muslim women have until now either had to sit on one side or go into the water in their regular clothes. To them, the 'Shariah swimsuit' offers a new solution. It is a high-necked, swimming costume with sleeves and a small skirt, to be worn over long trousers. Aheda Zanetti, a Lebanese Australian sells her Burqinis (Burkha + Bikini = Burkini) and hopes to widen the garment's demand among Muslim women at beaches. These are some glimpses of the development of Islamic sports costumes for Muslim women divers to enjoy swimming with fulfilling Islamic norms of *Aurah*. Ruqayya al-Ghasara of Bahrain proved at the Beijing Olympics that her Muslim attire was not an obstacle". Ruqayya shot to world fame when she sprinted to the gold medal at the Doha Asian Games in 2006. She was among three Muslim women athletes who wore the Islamic attire in Beijing. Two

others were Homa Hosseini of Iran and Shaimaa El-Gammal of Egypt.⁷ In other sports also there should be introduced Islamic standard costumes, which provide opportunities for Muslim women to participate in sports, such as tennis, soccer, volleyball, basketball, skating etc.

Conclusion

Islam is not a hindrance for a Muslim sportsman, if he seeks to practice Islam with sports as a profession. Recently the cricket team of Pakistan proved it with showing a great interest in practicing Islam. Many of the senior members of the team like Saeed Anwar, Saleem Malik, Shahid Afridi, Inzamamul Haq proved that it is easy to be a good sportsman with firmly practicing faith. Their spiritual character caused a great impact on other players to understand the true spirit of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself used wrestling for Islamic Dawah to a bodybuilder Rukanah, the related Hadith we have quoted in wrestling section.

It reveals that sports could be a good means of Islamic Dawah if the sportsman be a nice Muslim and able to present Islam properly to others.

Notes and references

1[http://www.searchtruth.com/](http://www.searchtruth.com/book_display.php?book=033&translator=2&start=0&number=6441)

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2[http://www.searchtruth.com/](http://www.searchtruth.com/book_display.php?book=67&translator=1&start=0&number=423)

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3Mujaththema: Flesh cut down from the body of a live animal.

4[http://islamicfinancialfreedom.com/](http://islamicfinancialfreedom.com/HIJAB%20&%20AURA.htm)

5<http://www.gbrathletics.com/ic/isg.htm>

6<http://www.ifws.org/portal/default.aspx>

7[http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/](http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=14798)

Note: Most of the Ahadith mentioned in this article are collected from www.searchtruth.com. Therefore we provided URL of every Hadith in references. One can easily find a Hadith by simply pasting its URL in the address bar.

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